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# COMPARATIVE PANDEMIC MITIGATION MEASURES IN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN, ISLAMIC AND CONTEMPORARY (COVID-19) PERIODS

Sambu Alice<sup>1</sup>, Mohamed A. Adan<sup>2</sup> Morompi Ole Masago<sup>3</sup>

1. Ag. Dp. Dean of Students, Maasai Mara University, Kenya.

2. Dean of Students, Maasai Mara University, Kenya.

3. Ag. Ass. Dean of Students Maasai Mara University, Kenya.

Corresponding Author: [asamba@mmarau.ac.ke](mailto:asamba@mmarau.ac.ke)

## ABSTRACT

Pandemics have long existed and have caused disastrous effects on humans. They have resulted in deaths and paralysis in different sectors of life. Ancient Christian and Islamic religious texts have teachings on measures to contain various diseases. The main aim of this study was to review the relationship between these pandemic measures. Pandemic mitigation measures in ancient Christian, Islamic, and contemporary eras have some similarities and differences. A desktop review was conducted regarding the content and citations from The Holy Bible, The Holy Quran, Hadiths, and research papers on pandemic containment measures. The study focused on handwashing and maintenance of hygiene, the use of pharmaceuticals, drugs, and vaccines, isolation and quarantine, and lockdown restrictions. The study concluded that there is a strong relationship between Christian, Islamic, and modern pandemic containment measures.

## KEYWORDS

Pandemic, Mitigation Measures, Ancient, Christian, Islamic, Covid-19.



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## Introduction

Pandemics spread across countries and continents and affect a wider part of the globe as well. Several known pandemics cost the world much. The worst and greatest pandemic since the 20<sup>th</sup> century were influenza (Salzberger et al., 2018). The pandemic sprouted in around 1918 and was solved in around 1930. The main reasons for the delay were the world war and again it was difficult to control the pandemic since no one knew what was causing the infection until 1930. The pandemic claimed several lives worldwide and caused more losses. Similarly, there are several other pandemics in the ancient Christian era as well. Back then pandemics were referred to as plagues. A common plague that killed over five thousand people in Egypt and Rome in just a day appeared (Geoffroy & Díaz, 2020). This pandemic was called the black plague and cleared the Roman Empire in ancient times. This implies that pandemics date back to ancient Islamic and Christian times as well.

Since the pandemics are caused by very complicated microorganisms as well as viruses, sometimes they might be hard to immediately clear, but can always be managed (Knowles, 2020). an example of the previous pandemics including the most current one, COVID-19, never ended but are managed to come up with low numbers of infections and later stable life. According to virologists, when the infection affects half the population a saturation point is attained and thus it normally goes down but can never be treated or cured. There is a major gap on how to prevent people from dying since curing is a problem. Some measures like wearing face masks and washing hands have been used in containing pandemics (Xiao et al., 2020). The comparison of how these containment measures have been used in the ancient Christian and Islamic era and recent times has never been focused on.

In both the ancient Christian and Islamic eras as indicated in their religious texts, the fulfillment of the divine command or duties is viewed as an act of praise to God or an expression of thanksgiving to Allah for life, and as such it is a countenance of unlimited submission to His will. However, in the Islamic community, the fulfillment of these commands and duties changes with the onset of communicable diseases. During these times, Prophet Muhammad himself recommended that Muslims should avoid interacting with the sick and also limit all movements such as visiting each other and traveling. The Prophet also encouraged quarantine to prevent the diseases from spreading to other people or places (Piwko, 2021).

According to Sahih al-Bukhari (2005), it is clearly emphasized by Sunnah that “If you hear that there is a plague in a land, do not enter it; and if it (plague) visits a land while you are therein, do not go out of it.” In light of these, it can be deduced that Prophet Muhammad had already introduced pandemic mitigation measures in the ancient Islamic era (Piwko, 2021). These mitigation measures have been implemented in the contemporary times to control the spread of diseases by public health organizations such as the center for disease control (CDC). The means of maintaining cleanliness and hygiene and also dealing with infectious diseases that is encouraged among the Islamic communities were way much ahead of the Prophet Muhammad.

In the Islamic Era, the outbreak of Tha'un an infectious disease in the period 638-639 AD (17-18 H) in the land of Shams killed more than 30% of the population of Shams including the Governor and the Companions of the Prophet (Muadz bin Jabal and Suhail bin Amr) is similar to modern pandemics such as COVID-19. During the Tha'un pandemic, the Islamic Community was to adhere to the words of Sunnah as echoed also by Rasullah Muhammad Saw that “If you hear the plague raging in a country, then don't enter it; and if you are in that area do not go out to run from it” (Suyadi, Nuryana&Fauzi, 2020). This pandemic mitigation measure is very relevant to the modern-day

pandemic mitigation measures of Covid-19 such as maintaining distance, self-isolation, self-quarantine, staying at home, and lockdown of places.

In Christianity, it was often more crucial to deal with the disease's root cause through a ritual. Even though one may not be able to change their fate, rituals provided comfort through catastrophes. The Bible talks of isolation as a measure of mitigating diseases in the olden days. In the Bible, Leviticus 13-14 gives instructions on how lepers (people with skin diseases) should conduct themselves. Since the disease was contagious and would make a person unclean, lepers were expected to isolate themselves, show their impure nature, and warn other people of their disease (Viljoen, 2014). This shows that mitigation measures in the ancient Christian and Islamic era have some similarities to the modern mitigation measures. The table below shows a comparison of some of the pandemic mitigation measures in ancient Christian and Islamic-era.

**Table 1: Pandemic Mitigation Measures in the Ancient Christian and Islamic Era**

Name of the Pandemics	Origin	Year Contained	Affected Region	Control Measures at the time	Similarity to Contemporary Measures
The Black Death epidemic of 1347 in Egypt and Rome	North Africa	1352	Europe and Asia	Isolating arriving sailors until it was clear they were not carrying the disease, creating a social distancing	Arrivals in Airports and train stations were quarantined and tested for the Virus
Influenza in 1918	No universal consensus on it's the origin	1919	The effect was worldwide	Lockdown and isolation	Countries were locked down and isolation centers were developed
The 'un disease of 638-639 AD	Syria	639 A. D	Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, and Turkey.	Maintaining distance, isolation, and lockdown of places.	In the contemporary measures, the CDC and WHO recommended keeping a distance of at least six feet
Leprosy of 300 BC	North African	Cases of leprosy still exist	Europe, America, Asia, and the Middle East	Isolation in leper camps far from settled human habitation	The affected are isolated in the isolation centers
Yethrib Fever of 632 AD.	Unknown	Unknown	The effect was Global	The sick were isolated	Those who have contracted infectious diseases are isolated
Justinian /Justinianic plague (541–549 AD)	Europe	549AD	The entire Mediterranean Basin, Europe, and Asia	Lockdown of affected regions	Countries in the contemporary lock down their borders as a measure of reducing the spread of infectious diseases.
The Smallpox of 165 during the reign of Marcus Aurelius	Origin unspecified	Unknown	The whole World was affected	Isolation of the sick	Those that tested positive for the virus were placed in isolation centers.

## Research Problem

The study follows a desktop review of previously done research. Having in mind, that different pandemics have occurred and have always been managed and contained. Several mitigation measures have been put in place to contain the situation. A comparison of ancient Christian and Islamic pandemic containment measures and today's pandemic containment measures will have the following benefits. Determining the most effective containment measures that have stood the test of time will help in future pandemic management. Also, it will help in determining the mitigation measures that were used in the ancient Christian era and those applicable in today's society.

The main objective of this study is to compare the pandemic mitigation measures in the ancient Christian and Islamic eras versus those used in current times (Covid 19). Several pandemics which were experienced in the ancient times, and solutions that were found can be applied in contemporary society to mitigate the spread of pandemics.

## Methodology

The study was conducted using a desktop review of previously done works. This entails comparing information from other previous sources. This was done by searching relevant information and the journals that have the information of interest. Previously done studies were used to get the most current preventive measures as well. The literature was checked from all papers that were dealing with containment measures of pandemics. Having Covid-19 the most current pandemic, the containment measures during the pandemic were of great importance. The sample size for the study was selected by using searching specific terms on the internet. The term "pandemic" was of importance and thus gave rise to several papers whose information was used to derive the study comparison. Again, the holy Bible, the holy Quran and Hadiths were of interest. Searches from these religious texts included words like "pandemic and plague." Since in ancient Christian times, for example, today's pandemics would compare to plagues.

## Research Design

A comparative research design was employed to obtain data for use in the study. The holy Bible, the Quran and the Hadiths were keenly read and the pandemic containment measures were observed keenly. Again, other studies concerning the existing pandemics and containment measures were studied. The comparison was made between the ancient Christian and Islamic eras and the modern time containment measures. From the data, the similarities and the differences were drawn as well as differences. This helped in having a good and generalized conclusion as well as recommendations. This research design was employed due to the need for comparison. This led to the use of comparing tools between the ancient and today's containment measures.

## Data analysis

Data were analyzed using a test of confidence limits and it was at a 99.5% confidence interval. The mean and deviations were checked as well as the correlation between the ancient Christian era containment measures and the modern containment measures.

## Results and discussion

### Washing of hands and maintenance of hygiene

From the ancient Christian era point of view, cleanliness is essential (Psalm (51:7)). The aspect of maintaining good hygiene is always important and was used to contain pandemics back then. The

same aspect has been used in today's containment measures of pandemics. In a pandemic that involved leprosy in the Bible, cleanliness was applied as one of the ways to manage the problem. Leprosy can be defined as a disease that affects the nervous system as well as the skin and the respiratory system including the eyes. The disease is caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium leprae* (Sadhu & Mitra, 2018). Once in the Bible, there existed an army man called Naaman. He was invested by leprosy and for him to get healed he had to go and bathe in the waters of the river Jordan. The prophet of God by the name of Elisha commanded Naaman to get into the waters and the army man got healed of his leprosy.

*"...And his servants came near, and spoke unto him, and said: 'My father if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, would you not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee: Wash, and be clean?' Then he went down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came back like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean..." (1 Kings 5:1-19)*

This implies cleanliness like the washing of hands and body leads to the elimination of diseases and illnesses. By having Naaman wash his body seven times, he got healed and his body came to normal.

Similarly, in the Islam, the Quran and Hadith have teachings of the prophet that supported the maintenance of hygiene as one part of controlling illnesses and pandemics. The same happened when the prophet would sneeze, he would cover his face with his hands or the garment he wore. This would help in the restriction of airborne bacteria.

*"...Narrated Abu Hurairah: that when the Prophet would sneeze, he would cover his face with his hand or with his garment, and muffle the sound with it..." Vol. 5, Book 41, Hadith 2745, Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2745.*

This implies that maintaining a high level of hygiene would help in containing the diseases like the colds and such. Again, the prophet taught that being clean spiritually and in physical aspects would make one avoid many things which come in relationship with being impure.

In today's restriction and containment measures of pandemics, hygiene has been observed to ensure that the bacteria, viruses, and all other pathogens causing the pandemics don't spread. An example happened when there was the washing of hands as a restriction for the containment of the covid-19 pandemic.

*"...To prevent virus transmission, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends frequent hand washing with soap and water..." (Rundle et al., 2020).*

The above quote shows that one of the containment measures used in the latest pandemic on earth (COVID-19) is the washing of hands. Having good hygiene and cleaning hands thoroughly using some handwash like soap and plenty of water would prevent the transmission of the virus. This is used to stop the spread of the pandemic and finally end the pandemic by containing the situation. Maintenance of hygiene and washing of the body would help in containing the pandemic as well as reducing the rate of infection of the causative agents. Traditionally, the use of hygiene quality and washing of hands and the whole-body wash led to the healing of different conditions. If clearly and well related, it's evident that there is reduced transmission and which finally leads to the total eradication of diseases. Christianity demonstrates the situation by washing the whole body. The Islam religion makes it more clear by having the prophet's teachings. Again, it's evident that in today's life, washing hands is important as well.

## Pharmaceuticals, Vaccines, and Drugs

Traditionally the Christian point of view and some of the religious points of view in Islam history, medicines and drugs have been used to treat and heal as well as contain several conditions. To start with is imagining what life would be like without an immune. We need to keep on boosting our immune system for us to be healthy. Some of the various functions of drugs are; relieving pain, curing, preventing diseases, and boosting well-being (Duffy's Napa Valley Rehab, 2012).

In the Christianity ancient times, there used to be the application of drugs to heal and contain situations of unwellness. Just like we have hospitals today where we can have people being treated for various conditions and problems, in ancient times drugs were being used. In modern times vaccines and drugs have been used to boost immunity against some deadly pandemics. An example is the one cited in the book of Ezekiel in the holy Bible,

*"...11 But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. 12 Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing..." Ezekiel 47:11-12*

This implies that in ancient times, there was the use of fruits for healing relating it closely to the contents of the fruits, it shows that the fruits had the power of healing since they contained chemically bioactive compounds that can counter the activity of the disease-causing micro-organisms. In today's way of living, the drugs synthesized were first obtained from nature and thus made in the labs and industries to cater to the high demand and to prevent exhaustion of the drugs naturally. The fruits in ancient times could be used to heal and contain any type of disease including pandemics. Again, in the book of Revelation 22:2, there is an explanation of leaves being used for medications and treatments in different nations.

*"...down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations..." Revelation 22:2.*

From the above quotation, it's evident that leaves were used to heal the nations. The leaves ought to have contained some compounds which would be used to control the diseases and illnesses. In today's settings, plants are used to extract natural medicines which are used for healing and containment of illnesses. again, the leaves described in the bible are said to be the cure of the nations which can be interpreted as solutions to the pandemic. Since a pandemic can be a diesis that spreads so fast and over a wide area (like so described nations), the leaves would be used to cure such problems and restore health and the immune.

Another biblical point of view regarding the ancient time pandemic containment measures includes 2 Kings 20:7. The verse is about the boils Hezekiah had suffered from. It was commanded that an ointment was to be made by the servants and spread on the boil-affected region in Hezekiah's body. Upon application of the ointment, there was healing and Hezekiah recovered wholly from the defect.

*"...Then Isaiah said, "Prepare a poultice of figs." They did so and applied it to the boil, and he recovered..." 2 Kings 20:7.*

The use of medicines from the ancient Christian era point of view was effective in inducing healing and recovery. When people suffered from boils, some ointments could be used to heal and restore their immune of the individuals. Not only is today's society that drugs apply but also in the ancient times, the use of drugs was key.

In the Islamic context, the use of drugs was also applied to manage illnesses and sicknesses which can be related to pandemics. On the hadith, which deals with the teachings of the prophet, a group of people asked the prophet if it was rightful and sinful to look for medical care. The prophet replied that it was essential and good to do so than remaining calm.

*“...Seek (medical) treatment, O Slaves of Allah, for Allah does not create any disease but He also creates with it the cure, except for old age...” (Sunan Ibn Majah)*

From the above teaching of the prophet, it's evident that not only in today's times do we have the use of drugs for the containment of the diseases and pandemics but also in the ancient religious times. A group of people who wanted to know the opinion of the prophet concerning the use of drugs and seeking medical advice was advised to do so. Allah is the creator of the diseases and when he does so it comes with a cure which means that people should look for a cure for them to get healed from the diseases. This can be related to looking for medical advice like vaccines drugs and containments to curb the spread of diseases as well as pandemics as a whole.

In today and modern times, drugs have been used to control infectious diseases and illnesses. some of these infectious diseases include pandemics caused by viruses and bacteria. An example of a pandemic infectious disease is a severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) which is caused by the Coronavirus. The pandemic has caused paralysis in many sectors and the economy hence calling for a fast response to stop the spread of the pandemic, of the many measures used for containment of the situation is the use of drugs and pharmaceuticals. Cannabis sativa has been involved in a study that tries to check its antiviral activity regarding covid-19. It's a plant that has been used as a stimulant, and hallucinogen to suppress the nervous system.

*“...The modulation of ACE2 levels in these gateway tissues may be an effective strategy for decreasing disease susceptibility. Cannabis sativa, especially those high in the anti-inflammatory cannabinoid cannabidiol (CBD), has been found to alter gene expression and inflammation and harbor anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory properties...”(Wang et al., 2020).*

Cannabis sativa contains CBD, which is a biologically active compound. These compounds are associated with the inhibition of ACE2 levels in the lungs. The Covid-19 virus finds itself in humans through these cells. The bioactive compounds suppress the ACE2 cells thus reducing the infection rate. In general, plants have been utilized to contain pandemics from ancient times to the present.

Some studies are done about the use of organic and inorganic complexes to suppress and inactivate covid-19. These compounds have been used to facilitate the unwinding property of the duplex helicase of DNA strand hence less replication of the covid-19 virus. This implies that drugs and pharmaceuticals have been used to curb the spread of the pandemic.

*“...Metal complexes- based agents such as bismuth complexes form an attractive class of drugs with several therapeutic applications, including the inhibition and duplex-unwinding activity of SARS-CoV helicase by quantitative real-time PCR (Q-RT-PCR), phosphate release assay, and radioassay studies. Metal-conjugates show major effects on inhibiting the 3Clike protease of SARS-CoV and the replication of RNA-dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp)...” (Veerasamy et al., 2021)*

Vaccines have also been used to control the spread of pandemics including the most recent pandemic, but the development of vaccines is still a long process thus seeking another alternative to contain the pandemic. Bismuth complexes have been used to suppress the winding factor of the DNA. This has helped to contain the covid-19 pandemic.

There has been the use of drugs since ancient times. The ancient times, were the times when accessing health facilities was hard, and sometimes having access to standard medicine was a problem. The religious versions support the use of medicines in the control and the containment of pandemics. It's important, to use drugs and medicine to contain the pandemic and situations.

### Isolation and quarantine

Isolation has been one of the containment measures being used in controlling the pandemic. Since the old days including the modern days, it has been found effective as well. But has one ever thought from the point it emerged or when it started being practiced? It's just a wonder to use and it works without its history. In the old days, religious people used to have it as a containment measure. To start with is the biblical point of view on how isolation, as well as quarantine, worked wonders in the management of the pandemics. One of the points is when Aron, the priest of God was the medic of the time. he was the one playing the role of examining the wounds and giving the verdicts to be taken depending on the type of wound.

... *"When anyone has a defiling skin disease, they must be brought to the priest. 10 The priest is to examine them, and if there is a white swelling in the skin that has turned the hair white and if there is raw flesh in the swelling, 11 it is a chronic skin disease and the priest shall pronounce them unclean. He is not to isolate them, because they are already unclean. ..."* Leviticus 13:9-11

It's evident that in the bible, God had commanded his priest Aron, the power to decide the isolation of the unclean people and the impure people from the clean people. Once there was a sore in the skin isolation was one of the main fast reactions to the problem. It's defined that, a sore would represent a chronic disease. Chronic disease means a deadly infectious disease that would affect other people in society and cause suffering to them. The two types of chronic diseases defined in that concept were the defiling disease punishment and the uncleanness disease. One was to be isolated for seven days and another examination was to be done by the priest. If the same problem persisted, one was to continue with isolation for another seven days and the examination was to be redone again by the priest. If it persisted the disease was considered a result of defiling God's law and thus uncleanness. This called for the victim to wash his clothes and the following hygiene and then return to normal life healthy. The priest was to pronounce the victim clean from the unclean.

Another instance happened when we had Moses and the Israelites, at this point God was angry with those people who were impure and thus he would send a defiling skin disease to them. The disease was a result of not obeying God's will. The disease would attack other pure people in the camps if they would keep contact and thus isolation and quarantine were used to manage the spread of the skin disease.

*"...5 The Lord said to Moses, 2 "Command the Israelites to send away from the camp anyone who has a defiling skin disease[a] or a discharge of any kind, or who is ceremonially unclean because of a dead body. 3 Send away male and female alike; send them outside the camp so they will not defile their camp, where I dwell among them." 4 The Israelites did so; they sent them outside the camp...."* Numbers 5: 1-4

From the above point in the bible, Moses was leading the Israelites to the promised land. On the way from Egypt to Canaan, the journey had to take 40 years in the wilderness. The journey was quite long and thus camping was not an exceptional routine when night approached and when they were not on the journey. God's will was key and it was mandatory to be followed. Whoever defiled or went against the will of God, a punishment was served in return. God would send a skin disease to the



defiler and thus he would be isolated from the rest. It was a command that if they stayed with the rest in their camps, they would infect them and cause them to be impure and so they would stay outside the tents until when they get relieved from the punishment by God. It's evident that during the ancient times in the bible, God would send chronic skin diseases which can be compared to pandemics. Again, isolation and quarantine were the ancient ways used to deal with the spread of the skin disease to avoid contamination of the pure people by the impure people.

In the Islamic religion, the same isolation method was discussed and taught in-depth by the prophet on how to go about it. Isolation was one way of avoiding contamination as well as the spread of disease. It spotted where the prophet said.

*“...The cattle suffering from a disease should not be mixed with healthy cattle...” (Sahih al-Bukhari)*

The prophet teaches that if cattle are ill or in general if one animal is ill, it should be separated from the rest. This meant that the cattle can infect the other animals as well as other healthy livestock. To stop the illness and the weakness from spreading the prophet insisted that quarantine or isolation where the infected parties were not supposed to mingle with the healthy parties. This implies that human persons should also be isolated in case of serious diseases.

In modern times the same has been applied to control pandemics and illnesses. It's not only in the ancient and religious contexts the method has been used, but also in modern times during the regulation of pandemics. Though the method has been used it has been found to have different negative effects. Regardless of the negative impacts, the method has been very effective and thus highly recommended as a containment measure since it saves more lives and reduces the rate of infection.

*“...Transmission of infectious diseases is often prevented by quarantine and isolation of the populations at risk. These approaches restrict the mobility, social interactions, and daily activities of the affected individuals. In recent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic...” (Hossain et al., 2020)*

From the above research, it's evident that isolation and quarantine have been used to prevent the spread of diseases and highly infectious illnesses. The paper analyses the negative impacts of the method on the populations involved. Though it's good it's said to have negative impacts mentally but again it's one of the best methods used to counter the spread of infectious diseases in the contemporary society.

Generally, isolation and quarantine have been used as the best control measures to manage disease spread. This helps save lives and keeps the community healthy. It's used in modern times to contain the modern pandemics including the most recent pandemic, Covid-19. Again, it was initially used in the religious Christian times to contain the illnesses like skin diseases which were deemed as God's punishment to those who could not follow the law. Again, the prophet Mohammed, in Hadith taught about isolation and encouraged that if one was unwell, he was not supposed to stay with the healthy people but should be separated from the healthy population.

### **Social distancing is a method of controlling pandemics.**

Keeping a reasonable distance to avoid contamination, and the spread of diseases started a long time ago. Since pandemics are not new in the world, this method aids in dealing with pandemics. In the religious teachings, both Christian and Islamic teachings, it's evident that the method has been

applied. The first evidence in the Christian teachings is in the point where God was teaching people to keep a distance from the impure people as they tend to contaminate others,

*“...Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters...” 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.*

To keep off from the evil people and the unclean people, the Lord God advised the people to observe a reasonable distance. This though, might not have been applied physically, but spiritually. The implication of this is that people were to have some healthy distance to be kept for one to be free from problems. It might have been that people would become impure if they didn't keep the social distancing. The application of this would also be when there are diseases, it was important to observe the social distancing aspect as well to be free from high infection rates.

The social distancing aspect can also be found in the gospel according to John. Jesus was explaining the containment of purity and how to avoid evil. In the teaching, it's clear that people live in a real world and the only way to be pure is to keep off the evil.

*“...I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one” John 17:15.*

From the above teaching, Jesus meant that people cannot live out of the world for them to have their pure world, but through the teachings, containment measures can be taken and thus maintaining purity. He says that taking impure people from the world is not the solution but avoiding evil. In the same line of teaching, it's clear that one can avoid evil but only through keeping some kind of distance. Since the impure and the pure are all to live in this world. In today's pandemic and real situation application, social distancing is important to restrict infection of contagious diseases. Similarly, in the bible, the shot of God's glory was to remain separate and not to stay close to the pure ones to avoid spiritual contamination.

The Islamic religion, through the Hadith also explains the same thing. It happened when the prophet healed the leper without being in contact together. He sent a word of healing and the leper as well. This is an example of the application of the social distancing of the prophet.

*“...He, therefore, sent to them an angel who came to the leper and asked him what he would like best and he replied, “A good color, a good skin, and to be rid of what makes me loathsome to people.” Thereupon he stroked him and his loathsomeness departed and he was given a good color and a good skin...” (Sunan Ibn Majah).*

From the above quotation, it's evident that the leper had been infected by leprosy. As the prophet was moving around spreading the gospel as his daily duty, he came across the leper. The man had his skin affected badly by leprosy. So, the prophet asked the leper, by sending the angel. The man's wish was to get back his normal skin color. By the prophet not touching the infected man, he said a word and the man got whole again. He woke up and was commanded to return home healthy. This shows that the prophet did not only send teach about social distancing but practiced it. It also means that some diseases can be infectious and thus by keeping some distance and by not observing direct contact they can be contained and managed.

In today's generation, containment of pandemics using social distancing has been applied. It is amongst the best ways to control pandemics. During the latest pandemic, Covid-19, the method was applied widely and it showed positive results in limiting the spread of the pandemic.

*“...Public health guidance for those aged 70 or older was predominantly to undertake stringent social distancing within their household...” (Brooke & Clark, 2020)*

The article explains the effects of social distancing and other methods of containment for older people. The health care guidelines commended that these people would employ the social distancing aspect. This is because it could play an important role in the containment of the pandemic. Basically, from a long time ago, social distancing has been used as one of the containment measures. Spiritually in the Christian view, social distancing was employed in several aspects. again, the Islamic religion also applied the same containment measures. The prophet could not touch the leprous man as well. He sent a word of healing and the man was healed. This shows that it is one of the ways that is used to control illnesses. Similarly in modern times, there has been the use of social distancing well.

### **Lockdowns and restrictions**

Lockdowns were some of the restriction measures used back then and in today's containment of pandemics. Referring to a pandemic in the ancient Christian era where there were massive deaths due to anger from God. Lockdown was used to contain the situation. God was tired and felt bad for the people who indulged in sex and offered unholy sacrifices. As a result, God would bring a punishment that would be used to reveal the power of God as well as to cause discipline to the involved parties. Moses being one of the people involved in the mediation of the crisis, issued instructions from God that people were to stay inside the tents and they would not touch anything regarding the impure people. This was a warning so that God would release the punishment in terms of the earth swallowing the impure.

*“...Move back from the tents of these wicked men! Do not touch anything belonging to them, or you will be swept away because of all their sins. So, they moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram had come out and were standing with their wives, children, and little ones at the entrances to their tent” Numbers 16:23-27.*

When the people who were told to get back to their tents and leave the unholy tents went back. God swept the rest and many people died. In comparison to today's lives, staying inside the tents acted as a lockdown where people were locked from the evil people and secluded so that they can be saved from the pandemic. Similarly, it happens that the sick were secluded from the health of a pandemic and thus saving them from the effect of the pandemic.

The Islamic religion also practiced the travel bans in form of lockdowns. The prophet of Allah also taught about the issue for people to follow and find themselves safe and free from the spreading of illness. Lockdowns did not only apply to Christians but also Muslims. The support of the same is cited in the point where prophet Muhammed was teaching about the lockdown.

*“...If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it; and if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place...” (Sahih al-Bukhari)*

The prophet taught that traveling either to the place with the outbreak or out of the place is not good. It might lead to one getting infected or infecting others. This would be very effective in controlling the infection rates of diseases and pandemics. The prophet thus said that it's not good and, since people would follow the teachings keenly, it meant that Muslims used to practice the lockdowns and remain in place in case of an outbreak.

In current and modern times pandemics, the lockdown has been used to contain the same situations. According to (Joffe, 2021), lockdowns have been used to manage the situation when it came to the covid-19 pandemic. Their major mode of working was to have people being isolated from each other and thus preventing the rates of infection. Lockdowns would be used to restrict the movement of the people from one region to another and thus everyone would stay at his residence. By doing so the disease does not spread more and thus reducing the number of deaths.

Lockdowns are just a general view of how restriction happens. They can be thought of clearly as restrictions from moving to other places but staying in one's residence. Several things would contribute to the lockdowns. Some of which were grounding planes. In a study done in the UK about the effects of grounding off airplanes, it's clear that it had negative impacts (Adrienne et al., 2020). Having planes parked and not operational restricts intercountry travels. This is a type of lockdown that can be compared to having people not accessing another city except the one, they live in. In Kenya the religious faithful were barred from gathering for worship in their churches and mosques as a way of controlling the spread of the pandemic, covid- 19.(Sambu, et al.2021).From the comparison between ancient Christian, Islamicand today's times, it's evident that lockdowns were used to contain pandemic situations. They would be used to save several lives as well.

### **Wudu (Ablution) In Islam**

Islam has five times daily prayer as one of its tenets. They must carry out a purifying ceremony called *Wudu* before prayers. In this session one is required to purify his/her body, soul, and mind from filth and dirt. Thus, performing *wudu* is mandatory before offering prayers or performing an act of worship such as Adhkar. As such any Ibadah cannot start without it.

According to the Quran 5:6, "*O you who believe! When you intend to offer prayer, wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of major impurity, bathe your whole body. But if you are ill or on a journey, or one of you comes from a nature call, or you have been in contact with women, and you find no water then take for yourself clean sand or earth, and rub with it your face and hands. God does not wish to place you in difficulty, but to make you clean, and complete His favor to you, that you may be grateful.*" The Quran instructs the believers on the way to purifies themselves before prayers which also happens to be an effective measure against diseases.

*Wudu* promotes mitigation measures against infectious diseases in three main ways; first, it entails washing noses using nasal inhalation to draw water up to the nostrils, enabling proper cleaning of noses which eliminates at least 60% of harmful bacteria. This helps prevent illnesses such as sinusitis and flu (Sabra, 2018). Secondly, *Wudhu* is performed five or more times a day lowering the risk of contracting various infections through enabling an individual to maintain proper personal cleanliness (Khan &Yasir, 2020). Third, *Wudhu* cleanses and replenishes the skin from dirt and germs thus eliminating the over 500 harmful different kinds of bacteria and viruses on the skin that (AlGhamdi, AlHomoudi& Khurram, 2014).

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the comparison between ancient Christian and Islamic pandemic mitigation measures with modern Covid-19 measures offers insight into how pandemics have been managed throughout history. It is evident therefore that there is a relationship between these two traditional religious containment measures for illnesses and diseases and modern pandemic control measures. There exist also several citations in which the containment measures like observing hygiene and washing of

hands, use of vaccines and drugs, isolation and quarantine, social distancing, and lockdowns to contain pandemics and diseases have been examined. While there are similarities and differences between ancient Christian, Islamic and modern pandemic mitigation measures, there exists a strong relationship between these containment measures. Therefore, by analyzing these various mitigation approaches, essential lessons can be extracted and utilized in response to future similar pandemics.

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